European Education

ISSN: 1056-4934 (Print) 1944-7086 (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/meue20

An Improbable Identification? The Netherlands as a "Reference Society" within the Chilean Educational Policy-Making Debate (2014–2015)

Cristina Alarcón

To cite this article: Cristina Alarcón (2020) An Improbable Identification? The Netherlands as a "Reference Society" within the Chilean Educational Policy-Making Debate (2014–2015), European Education, 52:1, 48-67, DOI: 10.1080/10564934.2019.1694418

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/10564934.2019.1694418

EUROPEAN EDUCATION
2020, VOL. 52, NO. 1, 48–67
https://doi.org/10.1080/10564934.2019.1694418

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

An Improbable Identification? The Netherlands as a "Reference Society" within the Chilean Educational Policy-Making Debate (2014–2015)

Cristina Alarcón

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

ABSTRACT

This paper investigated a policy-making debate in Chile, by examining the construction of the Netherlands as a new "reference society". It focused on a reform agenda that aimed at a transformation of the neo-liberal school governance model. Based on the analysis of government documents, parliamentary debates, and media materials, the paper concludes that in addition to the consideration of PISA results the identification with the Netherlands served fundamentally as a political compromise solution.

Introduction

The discussion over the so-called "*ley de inclusión*" (inclusion law) of the center-left government of Michelle Bachelet (2014–2018) is arguably one of the most controversial policy-making debates on reform agendas Chile has seen in recent decades. The context of the debate was a very disruptive and critical phase of intense questioning of the education system. As a result of a massive student movement as well as international pressure, an education reform agenda was launched which, for the first time since the end of the military dictatorship (1973–1990), sought structural change in one of the most privatized, commodified, and deregulated school educational governance model in the world (Verger, 2014). The reformatory target of the "*ley de inclusion*" was the voucher-based quasi-market, which then had existed for more than 35 years, specifically the subsidized private schools. With regard to these schools, the reform agenda aimed to end profit-making (*lucro*), student selection (*selección*), and school fees (*copago*). Although the agenda also included the de-municipalization of public schools and free higher education, the debate on the "*ley de inclusión*" turned out to be the most controversial. In fact, a hitherto unprecedented dispute took place involving not only government officials, opposition parties, related think tanks, media, academics, teachers' associations, social movements, and the media, but also private schools and parents' associations. But what was new was not only the radical objective and the controversial nature of the dispute. It was also striking that the debate showed an almost compulsive tendency towards external reference construction - from the Netherlands to Finland.

Studies on the transfer of ideas, reforms, and organizational models from one context to another have experienced inflationary growth for quite some time in comparative education research (Phillips & Ochs, 2003; Steiner-Khamsi, 2012; Waldow, 2012). What unites these studies, despite their different terminology, is a fundamental change of perspective by focusing primarily

CONTACT Cristina Alarcón cristina.alarcon@hu-berlin.de Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Institute of Education Studies, History of Education, Humboldt University Berlin, Unter den Linden 6, 10099 Berlin, Germany.

on national or local contexts in order to investigate the adoption and recontextualization of global models and policies by national and local actors. Based on this shift in perspective, these studies were able to address globalization hypotheses with critical evidence, such as the "world culture" theory in neo-institutionalist terms (Schriewer & Martínez, 2004).

Within this perspective, recent studies examine how international organizations and international large-scale assessments (ILSA) such as the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) and rankings contribute significantly to the reference construction of some nations (Steiner-Khamsi & Waldow, 2018; Waldow & Steiner-Khamsi, 2019). Using the concept of "reference society", they specifically examine "how top scorers in ILSA are framed as "positive or negative reference societies" in the education-policy-making debate (e.g., Waldow, 2010; Sellar & Lingard, 2013; Steiner-Khamsi, 2014; Adamson, Forestier, Morris, & Han, 2017; Lingard, Martino, & Rezai-Rashti, 2016; Takayama, 2018). Interestingly, very few of these studies have focused on the Latin American context (e.g., Parcerisa & Verger, 2019).

Based on these studies, the aim of this paper is to investigate the dynamics of external reference construction in the context of controversial policy-making debates in a certain Latin American country. In particular, it will be examined how, why, and with what purpose the Netherlands was constructed as a "positive reference society" (Waldow, 2017) in the Chilean context. I consider the analysis of this policy-making debate to be useful because of the following factors:

1. From a *thematic* point of view, the study of the above-mentioned debate is very informative because it highlighted a possible educational policy "way out" from the neo-liberal path that the country has been taking for almost four decades. In fact, Chile has the most radical, far-reaching and long-lasting market and competition-based education governance model in the world (Verger & Bonal, 2016, 3). Numerous empirical educational studies have therefore devoted analysis to this exceptional case (e.g., McEwan & Carnoy, 2000; Hsieh & Urquiola, 2006; Verger, 2016). Moreover, the Chilean quasi-market model was presented during the 1990s by international organizations such as the World Bank as a prototype (West, 1997) for equivalent reform programs in other countries (Diaz Rios, 2018). The analysis of this policy-making debate therefore elucidates how the former "laboratory of neo-liberalism" put "de-commodification of education" at the top of the political agenda for the first time (Verger, 2014).
2. In *theoretical-methodological* terms, this case sheds new light on the conceptual research on external policy referencing in comparative education. It shows how controversial policy-making debates in the context of disruptive crises can instigate social identification processes with new international reference points, in this case with the Netherlands, but also with Finland. But why did the Chilean reformers prefer to turn to the Dutch education system rather than the Finnish one? Based on this case, it will be shown that, besides ILSA, local factors, in particular specific power constellations, continue to play a decisive role in external reference construction.

In a theoretical-methodological sense, this paper follows the so-called "externalization thesis". This refers to the reference and the selective transformation process of educational organization patterns, traditions of thought, and political trends into arguments used in domestic policy-making debates (Schriewer, 1988; Schriewer, 2007). "Externalization on world situations" specifically implies the reference to an "external point", either a national "reference society", or an "international organization, process or discourse" (Waldow, 2012, 419). These reference procedures basically seek to legitimize (or delegitimize) the political positions of a country, a party, or an organization within highly contentious policy-making debates (Schriewer, 1988; Waldow, 2012; Steiner-Khamsi, 2014; Alarcón, 2015). In the empirical sense, this thesis demands thorough

analyses of socio-cultural contexts in which, amid reform pressure, "reference societies" are semantically constructed.

In this paper I would like to connect the term "reference society" with the psychological concept of "identification". The term is intended to *explain* the mechanism of reference construction. Identification refers to adopting norms, attitudes, and behaviors from a respected or admired group (Smith, 2007, 835). I will distinguish between two identification modalities: identification as an operation of recognition, of putting-oneself-in-the-country (Fröhlich, 1994, 212), and identification as a concrete adoption (assimilation) of motives, attitudes (norms) of the "model" (Ritter, 1976, 135). The following arguments are laid out in this paper:

1. The Chilean identification process with the Netherlands followed pragmatic-strategic considerations, in which PISA results were an important factor, but not the decisive one.
2. The Netherlands was used to argue for the "normalization" and "humanization" of the privatized school system.
3. The "Dutch argument" ultimately served as a political compromise solution.

The empirical basis for the analysis is made up of three types of sources: government documents, parliamentary debates, and print, TV, and online media. The media analysis focused on the newspaper *El Mercurio*, which covers the right-wing conservative spectrum, the right-wing liberal newspaper *La Tercera*, as well as, digital media, *elmostrador.cl, ciper.cl,* and *udechile.cl*, which are more likely to be assigned to a left-wing progressive field. Furthermore, the web-sites of the news broadcasters *CNN Chile* and *24 horas* were also reviewed.

First, as part of an historical examination, I will discuss the most important measures of the educational reform of the military dictatorship. Then, I will outline the discursive content of the reform agenda of President Michelle Bachelet and address the motivations, interests, and alliances of key players in the policy-making debate. In the following section I will reconstruct the "Dutch argument". To do this, several discursive motives will be identified, and I will examine what ideas and principles different actors in the policy-making debate associated with the Netherlands. After that, I will discuss the "Dutch argument" considering the educational history and tradition of the Netherlands. This will then be compared with the Chilean view of Finland, because the reference to Finland also played an important role in Chile, albeit to a much lesser extent than the Netherlands. Subsequently, I will analyze and justify the thesis of the "Dutch argument" as a political compromise solution. I close the paper with a discussion of the most important results.

An Historical Review

About 60% of all Chilean students currently attend private schools. This puts the country at the top of all OECD countries, where, on average, only 10% of students attend private schools (OECD, 2014a, 5). Chile is also a leader in private education in the Latin American context (OECD, 2014a, 5). However, a historical retrospective shows that the situation was almost the opposite some 40 years ago. In 1980, 78% of students attended schools run by the state (Corvalán, Elacqua, & Salazar, 2009, 12).

To understand this dramatic reversal, a reference to the educational reform of the military dictatorship is necessary. As part of this regime, a so-called "neo-liberal" restructuring was carried out. The authoritarian conditions of the dictatorship represented "ideal" laboratory conditions for this restructuring (Verger, 2016). Its ideological originators were the so-called "Chicago Boys". The term "Chicago Boys" refers to their common denominator: almost all the group's members had acquired market oriented economic theories during their studies at the University of Chicago, notably those of Milton Friedman, Gary Becker, and Friedrich von Hayek (Valdés,

1995). From the mid-1970s, this group of Chilean economists assumed positions of leadership in the military dictatorship's ministries and planning centers.

The school reform instituted a so-called "neo-liberal" governance education model based on privatization, deregulation, and commodification by the establishment of quasi-markets through decentralization, free choice of schools, and education vouchers, coupled with the introduction of national large-scale assessments.

The first key element of the reform was decentralization (*municipalización*). The administration of public schools was transferred to the municipalities (*municipalidades*). The traditional *escuelas públicas* (public schools) became *escuelas* and *liceos municipales*, as they are still called today (Alarcón, 2017a).

The second key element was the introduction of a voucher system. Under the *ley de subvenciones* (subsidy law) (Decree 3476) of 1980, private and public schools received a per capita contribution or subsidy, according to monthly attendance (Ministerio de Hacienda, 1980a). In line with Milton Friedman's voucher program, this was aimed at encouraging the creation of an education market where public and private schools would compete for parental choice (Friedman, 2005 [1962]). According to the discourse, the ensuing competition between the schools would not only promote cost efficiency, but also the educational quality of schools in the long term.

In addition to the removal of bureaucratic hurdles and the introduction of tax benefits (*exenciones tributarias*), requirements for private school owners (*sostenedores*) were drastically reduced (Corvalán et al., 2009, 160). In addition, subsidized private schools could work for profit and were not accountable for the use of public funds (Bellei, 2016, 233–234). Moreover, in 1988, with the introduction of the so-called *financiamiento compartido*, subsidized private schools, which were previously fee-free, could charge school fees, but only with parental consent (Saavedra Facusse, 2013, 10–11).

The third key element of the reform was that private educational provision and choice were legally and constitutionally protected under the formula of the parental right to educate their children. The 1980 Constitution established under the military dictatorship and, with modifications, still in force today, enshrined the parents' "right to choose" schools for their children (Ministerio del Interior, 1980). In addition, the legal weight of the traditional principle of *libertad de enseñanza* (freedom of education) has been increased in favor of private school provision (Ministerio del Interior, 1980). This principle refers to the right to set up and operate private schools (mostly Catholic), as well as non-governmental supervision of these schools (Toro Cáceres, 2015, 44–47).

A fourth key element of the program was the close link between school competition and external assessment of student achievement. In 1988 the reformers set up a national large-scale test called SIMCE (*Sistema de Medición de la Calidad de la Educación*), which is still used as a quality control system for the education system (Guzmán, 1989; Benveniste, 2002). The media buzz surrounding the annual publication of school rankings with SIMCE data has been instrumental in building a positive image of private schools.

The transition to democracy took place in 1990 based on a negotiated pact which included the preservation of the institutional and constitutional framework of the dictatorship (Verger, 2016). The various governments of the center-left coalition *Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia* attempted to mitigate the unequal effects of the "education market" through compensation programs for the poor (Verger, 2016). However, they left the principles of the model unchanged (Corvalán, Carrasco, & García-Huidobro, 2016, 44). It was precisely this exclusive compensatory logic that the governing coalition of the *Nueva Mayoría* intended to overcome, at least in a rhetorical sense.

A structural result of the reform was the extension of a specific type of private school: the subsidized private schools (escuelas privadas subvencionadas), which received state subsidies and thus accommodated children from the middle and lower classes. These schools should be distinguished from the *colegios*, which function largely without government support, charge school fees,

and could generally be categorized as elite schools. This latter category of private schools remained untouched by the reform and they are still attended by a minority, i.e., 7%, of the total student body (Corvalán et al., 2009, 63).

The Reform Agenda

Michelle Bachelet's educational reform agenda was part of the so-called *"tres grandes reformas" (three large reforms),* a reform package which, besides education, addressed areas that had remained virtually untouched since the end of the military dictatorship (1973–1990): the tax and electoral systems and the constitution. This reform package is to be interpreted as the result of the aforementioned student movement, that emerged in 2006 and reemerged in 2011 (Stromquist & Sanyal, 2013; Alarcón, 2017b). As part of a broad social mobilization process, this movement branded the Chilean education system as an "apartheid system" (Asamblea Coordinadora de Estudiantes Secundarios (ACES), 2012). But additional political pressure came from abroad. Several OECD studies (2004, 2011a) pointed to the same inequality and segregation effects of Chilean education. For example, in 2011 the organization noted that, among all the countries participating in PISA 2009, Chile had the highest rates of social segregation in both private and public schools and significant differences in performance between socio-economically diverse students (OECD, 2011a). The fact that the Andean country was the first South American member state to join the OECD in 2010 increased that external reform pressure.

First of all, Bachelets' reform agenda showed clear intentions to de-commodify education. This was firstly, by defining "segregation" and "inequality", as well as the diminished "educational quality", as a basic problem (Bachelet, 2013, 16). Secondly, by defining that education no longer had to be considered a "consumer good" but a "derecho social" (social right) (Bachelet, 2013, 17). Thirdly, by placing concepts and ideas as social rights, elimination of profit-making, and free education, taken from the student movement, at the center of the agenda (Asamblea Coordinadora de Estudiantes Secundarios (ACES), 2012, 4–8, Bachelet, 2013, 16–21).

Furthermore, the reform debate was accompanied by a rhetoric that questioned the basis of the neo-liberal governance model. For example, Jaime Quintana, senator for the government coalition, in the March 25, 2014 issue of daily *El Mercurio* metaphorically compared the reform enthusiasm of the governing coalition with a *"retroexcavadora"* [backhoe] that would "destroy" the "foundations" of the "neo-liberal model" (Vega, von Baer, & Toro, 2014). Minister of Education Nicolás Eyzaguirre explained at a press conference on April 17, 2014 that the aim of education reform was to put an end to the existing "paradigm of education" (CNN Chile, 2014a).

The reform agenda was based on the following pillars: first, subsidized private schools should no longer be allowed to charge school fees *("no al copago").* The basic argument was that fees contributed to increasing segregation without significantly improving the quality of education (Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile (BCN), 2015, 5). It should be noted that charging fees was a common practice in these schools. The amount of the monthly school fee was between 1.50 and 118 euros, with an average of 24 euros. The average monthly income of the families of these schools was between 640 and 680 euros, considering that the corresponding cost of living for that year was estimated at 960 euros (Samelson & Kamin, 1975, 56). The reform strategy envisaged that the state itself would compensate for the lacking parental contributions with higher subsidies (Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile (BCN), 2015, 5).

The second basic point was the banning of student selection *("no a la selección").* The argument was that the prohibition of selection and any form of social "discrimination" would not only ensure the principle of parental choice of school, but also promote a "more inclusive", more cohesive *("más cohesionada")* and more democratic society (Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile (BCN), 2015, 7). In addition, the abolition of student selection would contribute to a higher quality of education, as schools would be forced to form more heterogeneous classrooms that

would improve their education processes (Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile (BCN), 2015, 7). In fact, in addition to socio-economic selection, the most subsidized private schools, as well as public schools, imposed academic requisites such as entrance exams, previous year's grades, personality reports, intelligence tests (Godoy, Salazar, & Treviño, 2014, 4). It was also controversial that in the most of subsidized private schools, these practices began at elementary or kindergarten age (Godoy et al., 2014, 4). The project therefore stipulated that schools should not impose requisites either on academic performance or on family, religious, or socio-economic conditions. Registration of school applicants should be organized through a central system by the Ministry of Education. In the case of increased demand, selection should be done at random (Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile (BCN), 2015, 7).

The third pillar of the reform agenda was the elimination of profit-making *("fin al lucro").* At that time, most subsidized private schools were for-profit schools (El Mercurio, 2014). The basic problem, it was argued, was that profit-making and education would follow contradictory logics: the possibility of profit would lead school authorities to focus on maximizing and redirecting economic resources rather than improving education (Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile (BCN), 2015, 8–9). Referring to several empirical studies, it was pointed out that these schools would not have a higher educational quality than nonprofit schools, or indeed that it would even be worse (Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile (BCN), 2015, 8–9). The project foresaw that private schools should become non-profit institutions (Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile (BCN), 2015, 25). Those school owners who did not want to follow this strategy would have to turn their institutions into private elite schools (Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile (BCN), 2015, 27).

The Controversial Policy-Making Debate

Few debates proved to be as contentious as the parliamentary discussion surrounding the *"ley de inclusión"*. Compared to the other legislative projects of the Bachelet government, the parliamentary discussion was quite long, at 13 months and 9 days (Holz & Medel, 2017, 135–136). Due to the tough opposition of the right-wing opposition, the bill was modified by numerous amendments introduced during the course of the debate. The opposition even went to the Constitutional Court to impugn the constitutionality of the draft bill.

It was also striking that a relatively large number of civil society actors participated in the discussion: a total of 111 organizations and individuals presented their views during the first reading of the bill before the lower house of parliament (*Cámara de Diputados*) and 56 during the second reading in the Senate (Holz & Medel, 2017, 137). The media coverage (print media, television, radio, and internet) also revealed the controversial character of the debate (Molina Monasterios, 2017, 200). However, it is significant that the media presented a predominantly negative perspective of the reform agenda (Molina Monasterios, 2017, 200).

The controversial nature of the debate was fundamentally due to specific power constellations linked to a profound ideological conflict. In the context of this conflict, various actors faced off with each other, but strategic alliances were also formed. The most important actors were the governing coalition *Nueva Mayoría,* which included, among others, the Christian Democrats, the Socialists, and the Communists; the right-wing opposition coalition *Chile Vamos* composed mainly of the parties *Renovación Nacional* and *Unión Democráta Independiente;* as well as representatives of the student movement, such as the *Confederación de Estudiantes de Chile* (CONFECH), *Asamblea Coordinadora de Estudiantes Secundarios* (ACES), and *Confederación de Estudiantes Secundarios de Chile* (CONES), which were situated on the left of the political spectrum.

The right-wing opposition coalition formed strategic alliances with civil society actors such as the private school association *Colegios Particulares de Chile* (CONACEP), established in 1977;

think tanks, such as the *Centro de Estudios Públicos* and *Libertad y Desarrollo;* as with a private-sector parents association known as *Confederación de Padres y Apoderados de Colegios Particulares* (CONFEPA). But the Catholic Church, as the most important educational institution in the private sector, was also part of this alliance. In addition to ideological motivations, the church fought, like the private school owners, for economic interests.

However, considering that the governing coalition had majorities in both chambers, the lengthy duration of the policy-making debate seems somewhat surprising. The problem was that the reform agenda itself provoked controversy even *within* the governing coalition. In particular, some representatives of the Christian Democratic Party were skeptical about the reform agenda, because of their ideological proximity to the Catholic Church, and also because some politicians were school owners themselves (El Mostrador, 2014a).

In the parliamentary discussion, *Chile Vamos* wanted to leave the foundations and rules of the education system untouched, especially those of the subsidized private schools. Regarding the termination of school fees, this right-wing coalition explicitly advocated their preservation (Holz & Medel, 2017). Opposing the prohibition of student selection, they argued for the importance of upholding the meritocratic principle (Holz & Medel, 2017, 142). In terms of ending profit-making, they proposed regulating, but not eliminating it (Holz & Medel, 2017, 169). In parallel, representatives of CONACEP and CONFEPA organized rallies and explicitly protested for the right of parental choice, for the principle of profit-making in schools and, quite peculiarly, for the "right to pay school fees" (Serrano, 2014).

While the right-wing opposition criticized the reform agenda because of its "radical" nature, the student associations questioned it because of its "moderation". The basic objection was that the reform agenda merely intended a "makeover" *(maquillaje)* of the existing educational model (Areyuna, 2014). The "historic opportunity" of change, as expressed by CONFECH President Melissa Sepúlveda during a massive rally on June, 10 2014, would be lost. She criticized that the reform agenda focused exclusively on the subsidized private school sector and left public schools untouched (Areyuna, 2014). The basic demands of the movement, as Sepúlveda put it, were "the defense, preservation, and strengthening of public education" (Areyuna, 2014). The movement exclusively understood *"educación pública"* (public education) exclusively the *escuelas municipales*, that is, schools which were administered by municipalities.

A Most Improbable Identification? The Netherlands as a "Reference Society"

As mentioned, the reference construction of the Netherlands is unusual for the Chilean context and can therefore be described as improbable. The Netherlands only appeared in the context of educational policy-making debates in the middle of the 2000s, but would become one of the most cited examples in this policy-making debate (Parcerisa & Verger, 2019). Actually, In the parliamentary debate it was the most frequently cited example, although there were also references to Finland and the United States, among other countries (Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile (BCN), 2015). So, why the Netherlands? The Netherlands represents not only a different cultural tradition but also a language that is almost unknown in the Latin American context. Also, unlike other European countries or the United States, there are no close economic, scientific, and/or cultural alliances with Chile. Similarly, in terms of the educational history of both countries, there were only minor encounters, exchange processes and cooperation. In fact, between the nineteenth century and the middle of the twentieth century, France, Germany and the United States were the main educational reference societies (Alarcón, 2014). What characterized the Chilean construction of the Netherlands therefore was distance and even relative ignorance. Paradoxically, relative ignorance, that is "not knowing too much about the country", makes attribution strategies easier (Waldow, 2010, 507). This ignorance or detachment also left Chilean reformers with few preexisting presuppositions or even stereotypes. This shows a contrast to the dynamics of the

reference construction of East Asian PISA top scorers in Australia, Germany, and South Korea (Waldow, Takayama, & Sung, 2014).

The construction of the Netherlands as a "reference society" also seems to be improbable because the country does not rank among the top scorers in ILSA or PISA, even though it is considered an "overall high performer" (OECD, 2014). For example, the Netherlands came 10th in both the 2009 and 2012 PISA tests (OECD, 2010, 5; OECD, 2014c, 8). Moreover, in comparison to Finland, the Dutch educational system is not a usual "reference society" in the context of ILSAs. In 2000 the former was widely presented as an international "reference society" because of its top scores in PISA (Waldow, 2010, 499).

Therefore, of course, the question arises as to why the Chilean reformers did not orient themselves toward Finland and instead selected the Netherlands. The answer is that PISA certainly functioned as a factor in the Chilean reference construction of the Netherlands. In other words, academic quality and efficiency, which PISA claims to attest at the international level, were important selection criteria, but they were not the only ones. An even more decisive criterion that was considered was the governance model of the education system. As already mentioned, identification processes are based on a recognition operation, that is a mirroring process. Thus, the only countries similar to Chile in structure, organization, and, more specifically, the proportion of students attending private schools are, in descending order, Macao-China, Hong Kong-China, Dubai, Belgium, the Netherlands and Ireland (OECD, 2012, 18). The fact that the selection fell to the Netherlands and not to Asian countries may well be firstly, due to Chile's historical orientation towards Western Europe (Alarcón, 2014). Asian countries have so far not functioned as model states in education. Secondly, the proportions of students attending private schools in the Netherlands and Chile was very similar: 66% *vs.* 58% (OECD, 2012, 18). Thirdly, state-subsidized private schools have a special significance in both countries. Fourthly, the Netherlands was preferred over other European countries, such as Belgium or Ireland, because only the Netherlands shared a key feature with Chilean education: the legal financial equality between private and public schools. In the Netherlands, this legal equality has existed since 1917 (Franken & Vermeer, 2017, 3), while in Chile it was established during the educational reform of the military dictatorship (Ministerio de Hacienda, 1980a; Ministerio de Educación, 1990). The identification process was complete. The Dutch school system was the only country in the world, with which the Chilean school system shared the following attributes: high private school provision; the centrality of state-subsidized private schools; the principle of parents' free choice; and the constitutional equality between private and public schools.

The "Dutch Argument"

One of the pioneers among Chilean admirers of the Netherlands was the well-known Chilean education researcher and politician José Joaquín Brunner. He is considered one of the intellectual originators of the educational reforms launched by the *Concertación* coalition during the 1990s. As early as March 6, 2011, that is, three years before the policy-making debate, he pointed, in the news article *El Mercurio*, at that common node between the Chilean and Dutch school system: the legal equality between subsidized private and public (municipal) schools. He called this equality principle "*igualdad de trato entre lo público y privado*" [equality of treatment between the public and private sphere] (Brunner, 2011). According to the second operation of identification, namely that of assimilation, Brunner argued that the "Dutch model" should promote an "institutional learning process" within the reform discussion (Brunner, 2011). He underlined the importance of the equality principle arguing that this equality should be extended in the sense of an "*igualdad de trato y de exigencias*" (equality of treatment and requirements between the public and private sphere) (Brunner, 2011) in order to counteract discrimination in the municipal sector. Brunner also used the Dutch example to legitimize the concept of a "public educational system"

(Brunner, 2011). This term covered both the *escuelas municipales* and private subsidized schools. This discourse strategy would run like a common thread through the entire reform discussion. Interestingly, the right-wing opposition not only welcomed this strategy, but also embraced it. The student movement, however, understood only the *escuelas municipales* as being *"educación pública"*, as already mentioned.

As part of the assimilation strategy, the "Dutch argument" was aimed at leaving the structural foundations of the Chilean quasi-market untouched, while changing certain *rules* of this quasi-market. For example, in a news article article in *La Tercera* "*¿Cómo es el modelo escolar holandés?*" (What does the Dutch school model look like?) published on July 27, 2014, it was stated that the "experience" of the Netherlands is "regarded by Chile as an example from which lessons could be taken" (Muñoz, 2014). Gonzalo Muñoz, head of general education at the Ministry of Education, whose party, *Revolución Democrática* was close to the governing coalition, also argued in this direction (Muñoz, 2014). According to Muñoz, the "Dutch example" is *"súper importante"* (extremely important) for the education reform, because unlike Chile, not only should the "rights" of state and private school authorities be equal, but also their "duties" (Muñoz, 2014). In the Netherlands, unlike Chile, private school operators are not allowed "to profit, to discriminate, to charge school fees" (Muñoz, 2014).

PISA was certainly used in a discursive manner to legitimize the selection of the Netherlands. For example, in the context of the reform discussion, PISA was evoked as a discursive projection of a "good educational system" (Waldow, 2010, 498), or specifically of an "efficient" one, that is, PISA was associated with "collective utility oriented" patterns (Nikolai & Rothe, 2017, 131). In this line of reasoning, the cited news article attributed academic "effectiveness" according to "international standards" to the Netherlands (Muñoz, 2014). In the 2012 PISA study it was argued that, the country was "among the 15 best countries" and "surpassed several other developed countries in academic performance" (Muñoz, 2014). Interestingly, Chilean reformers showed similar arguments to economists of the World Bank, who praised the private provision and school autonomy of the Dutch system as well as its good performance in PISA (Patrinos, 2013).

The Netherlands as a "Normalization" Argument

First of all, the Dutch model was used in connection with a "scandalization" strategy by highlighting the weaknesses of the educational system as a result of comparison (Steiner-Khamsi, 2003). Secondly, the reformers used a "normalization" argument by claiming that the Chilean school system shares a world-wide exceptionality or uniqueness with the Dutch system, but is "abnormal" in the international context (Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile (BCN), 2015). It is "abnormal" in the sense that it has certain unique, undesirable, and inadequate features, that do not even exist in the Dutch example. Thus, the reformers argued, a "normalization" of the existing educational model is necessary. In this regard, the Minister of Education, Nicolás Eyzaguirre, used the Dutch example in the Senate debate of January 22, 2015 to point out the "uniqueness" of the Chilean model. Eyzaguirre spoke of a Chilean "hyperliberalism" which should be normalized:

> […] It is an almost unique model in the world. In fact, regarding parents choice, it is much more liberal then the freest systems in the world, such as Belgium and the Netherlands (República de Chile, 2015b, 53).

The Christian Democratic senator Ignacio Walker argued similarly in the Senate debate of January 21, 2015: "Chile is the only country on planet Earth that allows profit from public funds, school fees, and student selection" (República de Chile, 2015a, 47).

It was not only reformers, but also scholars that used the "uniqueness" argument to legitimize the reform. This was the case of the study *"Apoyo público a escuelas privadas. Casos nacionales y lecciones para Chile"* (Public support for private schools. National cases and lessons for Chile) by

the researchers Cristián Bellei and Carolina Trivelli of the Centro de Investigación Avanzada en Educación de la Universidad de Chile (Bellei & Trivelli, 2014). The study was compiled on behalf of the Inter-American Bank for Development, IBD, and referred to seven national cases in which private schools are subsidized by the state: the Netherlands, Belgium, the United States, Colombia, Sweden, England, and Canada. According to Bellei, "the Chilean case is one of the extremes in market-driven privatization policies", thus, "Chile could well adopt some of the basic rules of the Dutch model" (Bellei & Trivelli, 2014).

Educational researcher Gregory Elacqua, then director of the Institute of Political Sciences of the Faculty of Economics at Universidad Diego Portales, also declared, in a presentation to the Senate Education Commission on January 20, 2015, that the reform agenda should follow the example of the Netherlands in order to "correct" the "Chilean experiment". (Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile (BCN), 2015, 1045). "Experiment" was the description of the exceptional features of the Chilean education system among the OECD countries. In no other country, with the exception of Sweden, are private schools allowed to make profits from government subsidies, and in no other country can these schools charge compulsory fees (Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile (BCN), 2015, 1045).

As already mentioned, coupled with the argument of "uniqueness", the concept of the Chilean "anomie" was cited. This key concept was used by several government representatives, such as Education Minister Eyzaguirre in a television interview in July 2014 (Gallardo, 2014) and by the members of the government coalition Carlos Campos and Maya Fernández (Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile (BCN), 2015, 385, 419). However, pro-government representatives of progressive think tanks and researchers also referred to this concept. For example, in an interview given to news channel 24 H in March 2014, Mario Waissbluth of the social-democratic think tank Educación 2020 linked this anomie argument to moral categories: Chile is "the most disgustingly segregated and classist country in the world" (Balart, 2014). Furthermore, he explicitly used the Dutch example as a political reassurance strategy (Balart, 2014). He questioned the opposition's "terror campaign" and appeased critics by stating that the reform project did not seek to end subsidized private schools, but was a reform that would follow the *"modelo holandés"* (Dutch model) (Balart, 2014). The "normalization" argument was used here in the sense of a "humanization" strategy, with the aim of making the Chilean education system worthy of human dignity (*menschenwürdig*).

Researcher Bellei would also make critical references to the "situation of anomaly due to an extreme market orientation" of the Chilean education system (Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile (BCN), 2015, 102), underlining that both Dutch and Belgian education were "efficient" and could be "replicated" (Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile (BCN), 2015, 637).

In summary, it can be stated that the "Dutch argument" was cited in order to present the education reform agenda fundamentally as a "normalization" and "humanization" strategy by removing from the Chilean educational model those elements shown to be "unique" *and* "immoral": profit-making, student selection, and fees.

Excluding History

It is striking how references to history, and in particular educational history, were almost invariably excluded in the Chilean reference construction of the Netherlands. Thus, there was virtually no discussion of the fact that the high level of private school provision in the Netherlands and the equivalent status of private and public schools under the constitution, was the result of a legal compromise solution in 1917 (Franken & Vermeer, 2017). This compromise solution was the culmination of a long religious conflict, in particular a school struggle *(schoolstrijd)* between Protestant and Catholic, but also secular forces which took place between 1848 and 1917

(Franken & Vermeer, 2017): a conflict rather alien to a country with a far-reaching and dominant Catholic cultural tradition like Chile.

The dual education system of the Netherlands still consists of public and private, mainly religious, schools (Franken & Vermeer, 2017, 3). Public schools, that is, those owned and operated by a public authority, in particular municipalities, are called *openbare* (literally "public") (Sturm, Groenendijk, Kruithof, & Rens, 1998, 284). These schools are, as far as their administration is concerned, equivalent to the Chilean *escuelas municipales.* As in the Chilean case, these schools must maintain religious and political neutrality, but unlike the Chilean case, they can follow certain pedagogical currents. The other category of Dutch schools is *bijzonder* (literally "special") and, because of their administration, they are understood as "private" and mostly "denominational" schools (Sturm et al., 1998, 284). They are run by boards of various local organizations, such as parents' associations, as is customary in evangelical schools, or by the church and other religious institutions, as in the case of Roman Catholic schools (Sturm et al., 1998, 284). These local private educational institutions are financed according to their numbers of students at the same level as public schools (Sturm et al., 1998, 284). These institutions are equivalent to the Chilean *escuelas privadas subvencionadas,* although most of these schools are not denominational.

This dual school organization has its roots in the revision of the Dutch constitution of 1848 (Franken & Vermeer, 2017, 3). This revision recognized the principle of "freedom of education" in terms of religious freedom. Following this principle, the establishment of schools was no longer the sole prerogative of the state, and religious groups now also had the right to establish their own schools (Franken & Vermeer, 2017, 3). However, unlike state schools, the fact that private schools did not receive state funding was condemned as "unequal treatment" by denominational groups, especially Catholics and Protestants, with regard to the principle of "freedom of education" (Franken & Vermeer, 2017, 3). This situation led to the afore mentioned school struggle *(schoolstrijd),* in which those religious groups aspired to equal funding for religious schools. After several decades, this conflict was settled in 1917 by a political compromise or pacification *(Pacificatie van 1917)* between Christian political parties and the Liberals and Socialists (Franken & Vermeer, 2017, 3). This agreement established equal funding for public and private religious schools (Franken & Vermeer, 2017, 3).

Interestingly, the Chilean actors did not say much about the principle of *verzuiling* (pillarization) either. This concept refers to a confessional justified particularism connected with this compromise solution, in which religiously, socially, and culturally defined groups, for example Christian-Protestant, Roman Catholic, liberal and socialist, live side-by-side (pillar) and have their own social organizations (political parties, trade unions, business associations, professional groups, news articles, banks, etc.), and especially schools (Franken & Vermeer, 2017, 2). This structure of the entire public life after denominational and ideological aspects dates back to the nineteenth century and is now considered a thing of the past, except in the school system. It seems paradoxical, therefore, that the Chilean reformers were guided by an educational model that was described as a "voluntary apartheid in education" (Sturm et al., 1998, 288) because of the maintenance of the pillarization principle. In fact, beyond the historical tradition of pillarization, recent research has shown high rates of school segregation, connected with residential segregation in large Dutch cities (Boterman, 2018). Therefore, the Chilean orientation towards the Netherlands seems to be contradictory, because the reformers had defined the reduction of social segregation as a basic objective of their agenda (Bachelet, 2013, 16).

All in all, it should be noted that the Chilean tradition of education and history played no important role, either as a criterion for selection or as an argument for orientation towards the Netherlands. As the brief historical review of Dutch educational history shows, there were important differences between the two educational traditions, such as pillarization as a social

principle and the compromise of 1917. What is more, the identification with the Netherlands seems almost paradoxical with regard to the reform goal of Bachelet's government to reduce the "alarming levels" of social segregation (Bachelet, 2013, 16).

The Conflicting Finnish Example

The consensus-building character of the Dutch education model should clearly contrast with the "uncomfortable" Finnish example. The Chilean reference to Finland is far from surprising. As already mentioned this country was constructed as an international model because of its top scores in PISA (Waldow, 2010, 499). Moreover, Finnish education has been praised as a top perfomer *together* with high levels of social equity (OECD 2013). Therefore, of course, the question arises as to why the Chilean reformers did not orient themselves to Finland and instead selected the Netherlands.

As already stated, during the parliamentary discussion, Finland was one of the leading "reference societies", being evoked by both center-left and right-wing politicians (Parcerisa & Verger, 2019). The latter, however, used the Finnish example to slow down the reform agenda, the former to legitimize it.

Interestingly, during the most heated phase of the reform discussion, in November 2014, a 30-member delegation traveled to Finland, and not the Netherlands. Following an invitation from the Finnish government, the Minister of Education, Nicolás Eyzaguirre, representatives of various think tanks, government officials, parliamentarians of both coalitions, educational researchers and representatives of the teachers' association *Colegio de Profesores* visited the country. The members of parliament also included former key figures of the student movement, such as Camila Vallejo and Giorgio Jackson (El Mostrador, 2014b).

It could have been the beginning of a process of reference construction and educational cooperation, but instead the Finnish example caused some discomfort, both among the government officials and the representatives of the right-wing coalition. Actually, the fact that the reform goals, namely fee-free schools, no student selection, an no profit-making, were implemented in Finland for decades (OECD, 2014b), was left almost unmentioned by them. For example, Minister of Education Eyzaguirre relied on moderation during his stay: "[…] one has to take a good deal of care in order to adapt the lessons we are learning here because we are a quite different people, we have other rules" (Ojeda, 2014). In other words, identification with Finland is difficult because there are too many differences. Secondly, their positions revealed a highly selective perception of the Finnish education system. According to their discourse, only one element was worth being imitated: teacher training. In fact, Eyzaguirre defined teacher training as the only possible "space for collaboration" between the two countries: "They are world-class in this respect and I believe we can derive some useful experiences in a relatively short term" (Ojeda, 2014). The same thematic focus on Finnish teacher training was revealed by the right-wing opposition senator Andrés Allamand. He referred favorably to the social "prestige" and "autonomy" of Finnish teachers, traits that Chilean teachers would lack (Ojeda, 2014). However, he used the Finnish example to criticize the goal of the discussed education reform. So, he declared: "The reform should have started with the teachers!" (Ojeda, 2014).

By contrast, for the left-wing spectrum, especially the student movement, Finland was held up as a model since the massive reform protests of 2011 (La Nación, 2011). That year, the president of the FECH, Camila Vallejo, told TV channel CNN Chile in an interview that the need for a "fee-free, democratic, and quality education system" was not "utopian": it existed in Finland (La Nación, 2011). To Vallejo, Finland was therefore completely different than for the government or the right-wing opposition coalition (La Nación, 2011). She understood Finland as an example of "almost 100% public education", high quality and free education (La Nación, 2011).

Congressman Giorgio Jackson also expressed his admiration for the Finnish example after returning from the Finnish pilgrimage. In an interview to CNN Chile on November 10, 2014, he declared that Finland's top scores in PISA and its low performance variance make it suitable for an education system with "more equity and quality at the same time" (CNN Chile, 2014b). Unlike the Minister of Education, he emphasized that in Finland, the Chilean reform goals had been implemented a long time ago, that is "for 40 years": "fee-free education for all" excellence" "no profit-making" and "no access discrimination" (CNN Chile, 2014b).

In summary, it can be stated that the "Finnish argument", in contrast to the "Dutch argument", mainly revealed the existing dissent among the various political actors. This is striking considering that Finland is not only a top scorer in PISA, but has also been implementing the Chilean reform goals for years. Following Gita Steiner-Khamsi (2014), the reformers and the representatives of *Chile Vamos* showed little receptiveness for lesson-drawing from Finland, using the "argument of fundamental differences" by alleging that the contexts were not sufficiently comparable "to learn a lesson" (163).

Reference Societies as a Compromise?

But why and for what purpose was the Netherlands designated as a new model state? The argument of this paper is that the "Dutch argument" was above all a compromise solution. Thus, in the eyes of the reformers, it represented an ideal "middle ground" between an "efficient" but socially equitable and therefore "humanized" education system and the *conservation* of the existing neo-liberal governance model. Especially regarding the right-wing opposition coalition, the governing coalition, whether for pragmatic or ideological reasons, expressed willingness to compromise. Firstly, this willingness to compromise is shown by the fact that the governing coalition adhered from the outset, that is, even *before* the reform discussion, to certain basic principles of the governance model. These basic principles, which are found both in the government program and in the draft bill, and refer to the Dutch example, are, on the one hand, the principle of financial equality between public and subsidized private schools in the context of "equality of treatment" (Bachelet, 2013, 16–21; Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile (BCN), 2015, 3–29), and on the other hand, the principle of freedom of education, specially that of parents choice (Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile (BCN), 2015, 6).

Secondly, the willingness to compromise is revealed by the content of the law itself, specifically in regard to student selection (Ministerio de Educación, 2015).

Certainly, there are victories of the governing coalition.

Thus, following the Dutch model, it decided on both the abolition of school fees and profit-making. Furthermore, it was also established that student selection based on socio-economic and academic criteria would be eliminated (Ministerio de Educación, 2015). But an important *concession* by the reformers was the abolition of student selection on an academic basis. Interestingly, the right-wing opposition coalition cited the Dutch example *against* this measure. In the article "*Selección y Discriminación*" from November 16, 2014, Arturo Fontaine, longtime president of the right-wing think-tank *Centro de Estudios Públicos*, argued that the Dutch school system, which was "among the top 10 in the PISA test", used a system of academic selection (Fontaine & Urzúa, 2014). Indeed, the OECD attested that among the OECD countries, the Dutch school system (along with the Swiss one) had "one of the greatest degrees of student selection across schools, grades, and programs" (OECD, 2011b, 82). Finally, and according to the objections of the opposition, the law stipulated that schools with special profiles (sports, music, etc.) may select up to 30% of their students (Ministerio de Educación, 2015). The same applies to the so-called *liceos emblemáticos,* that is, traditional public *liceos* with high academic requirements. The selection, however, would be based on rankings, that is, the ranking of students in their previous schools. Another concession made by the reformers was gradual implementation. For example, student selection will not be fully abolished in the entire school system until 2020.

Conclusion: Beyond Pisa? "Reference Societies" and Specific Local Power Constellations

This paper addressed a hitherto unprecedented policy-making debate that took place during the center-left government of Michelle Bachelet (2014–2018). The context of the debate was an intensive phase of crisis. At the center of this discussion was a reform agenda that, for the first time in decades, aimed at a "paradigmatic" transformation of a neo-liberal governance model based on privatization, deregulation and commodification. This debate proved to be very special because in its context, it constructed a new "reference society": the Netherlands.

In a *thematic* sense, the paper showed how controversial, complex, and multi-layered this incisive reform discussion was regarding that "model country of neo-liberalism" (Ettel & Zschäpitz, 2016). The Netherlands represented a stopgap solution for a reform policy that had little room for maneuver due to the existing power constellations regarding political opposition from left and right, as well as structural conditions. This limited scope was due first to constitutional restraints. These limitations made it difficult to focus on the impoverished public sector. However, the lack of margin was also due to the special characteristics of the opponents to the reform. The explosive power connection between political-ideological opposition on the part of the right-wing and individual Christian Democratic politicians, the Catholic Church and the representation of strictly economic-corporate interests on the part of private-school associations should not be underestimated. Another element is the existing structure of the Chilean education system: meanwhile, private schools have reached the center of society. A reversal of this development would be exceedingly complex, also due to the constitutional factors mentioned. Likewise, the attempt to establish a new constitution would fail during the Bachelet government. Linked to this, a cultural factor acts as another obstacle to reform. The fact that a part of society defended ideas such as "private is better", the principle of free parental choice, and the "right to pay school fees", is also due to a cultural change in mentality that reformers had not initially recognized.

From a *methodological-theoretical* point of view, particularly with regard to processes of externalization and the construction of reference societies, this paper confirmed that PISA, specifically the "international ranking policy" (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004), acts as a significant externalization promoter in national debates (Lingard, 2011, 369). At the same time, however, the Chilean case also shows that PISA is not a sufficient factor to explain external reference constructions (Waldow, 2017; Waldow et al., 2014). In this sense, Finnish education, despite being at the top in PISA results, having high social equity levels, and having implemented the reform objectives, could *not* operate as an international reference for the Chilean reform agenda. Instead, an education system was chosen which, while "achieving high education performance and equity" (OECD, 2014) shows high levels of school segregation (Boterman, 2018). The paper thus confirmed the idea that, in addition to PISA, specific local factors, in particular power relations between the various policy actors, also play a decisive role in the dynamic of reference construction (Steiner-Khamsi & Waldow, 2018). These factors refer to an ideologically-politically motivated controversy between the government coalition and the opposition, coupled with the economic interests of certain civil society actors such as private school associations, as well as structural constellations and regulations of the Chilean education system. From a critical comparative perspective, local power relations should be therefore included in the analysis of externalization processes, in general and in PISA translation in particular (Steiner-Khamsi & Waldow, 2018).

This paper methodically linked the concept of "reference society" with that of "identification", with the aim of *analyzing* and *explaining* the mechanism of reference construction in more detail. The notion of identification is useful in that it distinguishes between two mechanisms: identification as recognition (mirroring) and identification as assimilation. The Chilean reformers therefore chose the Dutch example because it is almost the only one in the world where they could

recognize the structure, regulations and organization of Chilean education: high private school provision, the centrality of state subsidized private schools, the principle of free parental choice, and the constitutional equality between private and public schools. This mirroring was not possible with Finnish education, which is mostly based on public schooling. Furthermore, the Dutch example provided an ideal source of assimilation since, in addition to the common features mentioned above, the leitmotif "no profit-making, student selection, and fees" of the reform agenda had already been implemented. In contrast, the Finnish example provoked resistance from both the governing coalition and the right-wing coalition, which would hinder a Chilean-Finnish learning process or limit it to teacher training (Steiner-Khamsi, 2014).

In summary, it can be stated that the selection of the Netherlands followed rather pragmatic-strategic and utilitarian criteria. Therefore, the "Dutch argument" was mainly linked to performance-oriented efficiency and effectiveness. But some normative elements were also found in relation to the "normalization" and "humanization" argument. The strategic and selective character of the reference to the Netherlands, probably also plagued by relative ignorance, is confirmed by exclusion of the education history and tradition of the Netherlands; from the principle of pillarization to the compromise of 1917. It is also paradoxical in this respect that the orientation was towards a highly segmented education system, although the basic goal of the reform was to overcome the high social segregation.

Ultimately, I proposed the idea that the reference to the Dutch model ultimately served as a compromise solution. With this thesis I wanted to answer the question of what *function or purpose* the Dutch "reference society" adopted or fulfilled in the context of the reform discussion. In my opinion, it was used as a discursive legitimization of one of the first attempts at reform the Chilean educational governance model, but paradoxically also of its preservation. Specifically, the "Dutch argument" was used as a "normalization" and "humanization" strategy, in order to take from the Chilean educational model those elements defined as "exceptional", "immoral", and not worthy of human dignity (profit-making, student selection and fees). The "Dutch argument" therefore served the reformers in order to appease the vehement critics of the model, in particular the student movement, who had a radical rhetoric. At the same time, the "Dutch argument" served to allay its defenders, the right-wing opposition coalition, as well as certain interest groups such as the private school associations, by proposing and passing a *moderate* law. In fact, a discourse coalition between center-left governmental actors and some right-wing actors was notable in terms of considering the Netherlands as a "reference society". The use of the "Dutch argument" by right-wing actors as a means of *preserving* the neo-liberal governance education model can be verified in the book by Arturo Fontaine, published a few years after the introduction of the law (Fontaine & Urzúa, 2018).

Finally, the "Dutch argument" basically served to ensure the *conservati*on of the market and competition logic of the Chilean education model. In fact, the practice of state subsidies for private institutions remains within the context of constitutional equality between private and public schools. At the same time, the "Dutch argument" allowed certain *rules* of the governance model to be changed. Therefore, the neo-liberal basis of the Chilean governance model has not been abandoned but *tamed* within the reform. Education was only partially de-commodified.

Nevertheless, future studies should address the transnational multiplier effects of this policy-making debate. To what extent did the Chilean debate on "education de-commodification" (Verger, 2014) lead to similar discussions in other countries? And, did Chile itself operate as a "reference society" in these countries? In addition, future studies should examine the unintended side effects of the law. It can be anticipated that paradoxically the reform could lead to a *strengthening* of the market and competition logic. The abolition of school fees could even increase enrollment in the subsidized private school sector. Parents who previously had no access to this

type of education because of their low income could now choose private schools as they are free. As a result, the *escuelas municipales* would lose even more students.

Author Biography

Cristina Alarcón is Research Assistant and Lecturer at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Following a historical comparative perspective her research interest focuses on processes of transnational transfer of knowledge, models and practices between the nineteenth and twenty-first century. She currently investigates the transnational diffusion, circulation and reception dynamics of standardized testing in international comparison.

References

Adamson, B., Forestier, K., Morris, P., Han, C., (2017). PISA, policymaking and political pantomime: Education policy referencing between England and Hong Kong AU - Adamson, Bob. *Comparative Education*, *53*(2), 192–208. doi:10.1080/03050068.2017.1294666

Alarcón, C. (2014). *Modelltransfer im Schatten des Krieges: 'Deutsche' Bildungs- und 'Preußische' Militärreformen in Chile, 1879-1920 [Model Transfer in the Shadow of War: "German" Educational and "Prussian" Military Reforms in Chile, 1879-1920]. Comparative Studies Series: Vol. 25*. Frankfurt am Main et. al.: Peter Lang.

Alarcón, C. (2015). Referenzgesellschaft' als semantisches Konstrukt - 'Deutsche' Bildungs- und 'Preußische' Militärreformen in Chile, 1879-1920 [Reference society' as semantic construct - 'German' educational and 'Prussian' military reforms in Chile, 1879-1920]. *Tertium Comparationis*, *21*(1), 27–48.

Alarcón, C. (2017a). Class isolation. examining private schools in Chile. In T. Koinzer, R. Nikolai, & F. Waldow (Eds.), *Private schools and school choice in compulsory education: Global change and national challenge* (pp. 99–114). Wiesbaden, Germany: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden.

Alarcón, C. (2017b). Die StellvertreterInnen - Bildung und SchülerInnenmobilisierung in Chile,1990-2005 [The Substitutes - Education and Pupil Mobilisation in Chile, 1990-2005]. *Zeitschrift Für Pädagogik*, *63*(5), 596–613. doi:10.3262/ZP1705596

Areyuna, H. (2014, June 10). El Gobierno tergiversa las demandas en educación [The Government misrepresents demands on education]. *DiarioUChile*. Retrieved from https://radio.uchile.cl/2014/06/10/minuto-a-minuto-de-la-marcha-por-la-educacion/

Asamblea Coordinadora de Estudiantes Secundarios (ACES). (2012). *Propuesta para la educación que queremos [Proposal for the education we want]*. Retrieved from http://www.opech.cl/comunicaciones/2012/05/aces_final.pdf

Bachelet, M. (2013). *Programa de Gobierno Michelle Bachelet 2014-2018 [Government Program Michelle Bachelet 2014-2018]*. Retrieved from http://www.subdere.gov.cl/sala-de-prensa/programa-de-gobierno-michelle-bachelet-2014-2018-2.

Balart, A. (2014, March 30). Mario Waissbluth analiza la nueva reforma educacional que impulsará el gobierno [Mario Waissbluth analyzes the new educational reform that the government will promote]. *Emol.cl*. Retrieved from https://www.emol.com/noticias/nacional/2014/03/29/652513/mario-waissbluth-analiza-la-nueva-reforma-educacional-que-impulsara-el-gobierno.html

Bellei, C. (2016). Dificultades y resistencias de una reforma para des-mercantilizar la educación [Difficulties and resistance to a reform designed to de-market education]. *Revista De La Asociación De Sociología De Educación*, *9*(2), 232–247.

Bellei, C., & Trivelli, C. (2014). *Apoyo público a escuelas privadas. Casos nacionales y lecciones para Chile [Public support for private schools. National cases and lessons for Chile]: Documento de Trabajo 12 (julio)*. Retrieved from http://www.ciae.uchile.cl/download.php?file=publicaciones/12-072014.pdf

Benveniste, L. (2002). The political structuration of assessment: Negotiating State Power and Legitimacy. *Comparative Education Review*, *46*(1), 89–118. doi:10.1086/324051

Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile (BCN). (2015). *Historia de la Ley N° 20.845 [History of Law N° 20.845]*. Retrieved from https://www.bcn.cl/historiadelaley/nc/historia-de-la-ley/4020/

Boterman, W. R. (2018). School segregation in the free school choice context of Dutch Cities. In C. Bellei & X. Bonal (Eds.), *Understanding school segregation*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishers.

Brunner, J. J. (2011, March 7). El modelo holandés [The dutch model]. *El Mercurio*.

CNN Chile. (2014a). *Legislaremos para cambiar el paradigma de la educación [We will legislate to change the paradigm of education]*. Retrieved from https://www.cnnchile.com/pais/ministro-eyzaguirre-legislaremos-para-cambiar-el-paradigma-de-la-educacion_20140417/

CNN Chile. (2014b, November 10). Giorgio Jackson: "Hay una disputa cultural en torno a la reforma educacional" [Giorgio Jackson: "There's a cultural dispute over educational reform"]. [Television broadcast]. *CNN Chile*. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YOVWc-D81UE

Corvalán, J., Carrasco, A., & García-Huidobro, J. E. (Eds.). (2016). *Mercado escolar y oportunidad educacional. Libertad, diversidad e igualdad [School market and educational opportunity. Freedom, diversity and equality]*. Santiago, Chile: Ediciones Universidad Católica de Chile.

Corvalán, J., Elacqua, G., & Salazar, F. (2009). *El sector particular subvencionado en Chile. Tipologización y perspectivas frente a nuevas regulaciones The subsidized private sector in Chile [Typologization and perspectives in the face of new regulations]*. Retrieved from http://biblioteca.uahurtado.cl/ujah/reduc/pdf/pdf/mfn341.pdf

de Chile, R. (2015a). *Diario de Sesiones del Senado, Legislatura 362ª: 88ª sesión especial, miércoles, 21 de enero 2015. [Journal of Senate Sessions, Legislature 362ª, 88th Special Session, Wednesday January 21, 2015]*. Retrieved from http://www.senado.cl/senado/site/edic/base/port/sala_sesiones.html.

de Chile, R. (2015b). *Diario de Sesiones del Senado, Legislatura 362ª: 90ª sesión especial, jueves, 22 de enero 2015 [Journal of Senate Sessions, Legislature 362ª, 90th Special Session, Thursday January 22, 2015]*. Retrieved from http://www.senado.cl/senado/site/edic/base/port/sala_sesiones.html.

Diaz Rios, C. M. (2018). Foreign prescriptions and domestic interests: A comparison of education reform in Argentina and Chile. *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice*, *20*(2), 193–208. doi:10.1080/13876988.2016.1239321

El Mercurio. (2014, March 24). Reforma implicaría cambios en 78% de colegios subvencionados [Reform would mean changes in 78% of subsidized schools]. *El Mercurio*.

El Mostrador, (2014b, November 2). Los influyentes de Educación de visita en Finlandia [Influential Education Visitors in Finland]. *El Mostrador.cl.* Retrieved from https://m.elmostrador.cl/noticias/sin-editar/2014/11/02/los-influyentes-de-educacion-de-visita-en-finlandia/

El Mostrador, E. (2014a, October 29). Los intereses en educación de un sector de la DC que tensionan la reforma educacional [The educational interests of a DC sector that stress educational reform]. *El Mostrador.cl.* Retrieved from https://www.elmostrador.cl/noticias/pais/2014/10/29/los-intereses-en-educacion-de-un-sector-de-la-dc-que-tensionan-la-reforma-educacional/

Ettel, A., & Zschäpitz, H. (2016, June 9). Der Scheintod des verhassten Neo-liberalismus [The apparent death of the hated neo-liberalism]. *Die Welt*. Retrieved from https://www.welt.de/wirtschaft/article156012903/Der-Scheintod-des-verhassten-Neo-liberalismus.html

Fontaine, A., & Urzúa, S. (2018). *Educación con patines*. Santiago, Chile: Ediciones El Mercurio.

Fontaine, A., Urzúa, S. (2014, November 16). Selección y discriminación [Selection and discrimination]. *Elmercurio.com*. Retrieved from www.elmercurio.com/blogs/ … /Seleccion-y-discriminacion.aspx

Franken, L., & Vermeer, P. (2017). Deconfessionalising RE in pillarised education systems: A case study of Belgium and the Netherlands. *British Journal of Religious Education*, *41*(3), 1–14. doi:10.1080/01416200.2017.1405792

Friedman, M. (2005 [1962]). *Kapitalismus und Freiheit [Capitalism and freedom]*. München, Germany: Piper. Retrieved from http://www.gbv.de/dms/faz-rez/711207_FAZ_0015_15_0006.pdf

Fröhlich, W. D. (Ed.). (1994). *Wörterbuch zur Psychologie [Dictionary of Psychology]*. München, Germany: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag.

Gallardo, K. (Author) (2014, July 23). *Ministro Eyzaguirre pide coraje" para enfrentar la Reforma Educacional* [Minister Eyzaguirre calls for "courage" to address Education Reform]. [Television broadcast]. 24.horas.cl. Retrieved from https://www.24horas.cl/politica/ministro-eyzaguirre-pide-coraje-para-enfrentar-la-reforma-educacional-1344632

Godoy, F., Salazar, F., & Treviño, E. (2014). *Prácticas de selección en el sistema escolar chileno. Requisitos de postulación y vacíos legales [Recruitment practices in the Chilean school system. Application requirements and legal loopholes]*. Retrieved from http://www.educacion2020.cl/sites/default/files/ipe_cpce_01_requisitos_de_postulacion.pdf

Guzmán, J. A. (1989). Educación y política educacional [Education and educational policy]. In M. Hale, Tomás P. (Ed.), *Educación chilena: Doctrina y políticas* (pp. 11–32). Santiago, Chile: Editorial Universitaria.

Holz, M., & Medel, C. (2017). EL debate parlamentario y de los actores sociales en sede legislativa [Parliamentary and social actors' debate at legislative level]. In M de Educación de Chile (Mineduc) (Ed.), *Ley de Inclusión Escolar: El primer debate de la Reforma Educacional* (pp. 134–169). Santiago, Chile: Ministerio de Educación (Mineduc).

Hsieh, C.-T., & Urquiola, M. (2006). The effects of generalized school choice on achievement and stratification: Evidence from Chile's voucher program. *Journal of Public Economics*, *90*(8–9), 1477–1503. doi:10.1016/j.jpubeco.2005.11.002

La Nación. (2011, October 19). Camila Vallejo tajante: Finlandia es un referente [Camila Vallejo: Finland is a reference point]. *La Nación*.

Lingard, B. (2011). Policy as numbers: Ac/Counting for educational research. *The Australian Educational Researcher*, *38*(4), 355–382. doi:10.1007/s13384-011-0041-9

Lingard, B., Martino, W., & Rezai-Rashti, G. (2016). *Testing regimes, accountabilities and education policy*. London, UK: Routledge.

McEwan, P. J., & Carnoy, M. (2000). The effectiveness and efficiency of private schools in Chile's voucher system. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *22*(3), 213–239. doi:10.2307/1164241

Ministerio de Educación. (1990). *Ley 18.962 [Law 18.962]*. Retrieved from https://www.leychile.cl/Navegar?idNorma=30330&idParte=

Ministerio de Educación. (2015). *Ley 20845: De inclusión escolar que regula la admisión de los y las estudiantes, elimina el financiamiento compartido y prohíbe el lucro en establecimientos educacionales que reciben aportes del Estado [Law 20845: On school inclusion, which regulates the admission of students, eliminates shared financing and prohibits profit in educational establishments that receive State contributions]*. Retrieved from: https://www.leychile.cl/N?i=1078172&f=2018-08-06&p=

Ministerio de Hacienda. (1980a). *Ley 3.472 [Law 3.427]*. Retrieved from https://www.leychile.cl/Navegar?idNorma=237815&buscar=9.864

Ministerio del Interior. (1980). *Constitución Política de la República de Chile [Political Constitution of the Republic of Chile]*. Retrieved from https://www.camara.cl/camara/media/docs/constitucion_politica.pdf.

Molina Monasterios, S. (2017). La Cobertura mediática durante la tramitación de la ley de inclusión escolar [Media coverage during the passage of the school inclusion law]. In M de Educación de Chile (Mineduc) (Ed.), *Ley de Inclusión Escolar: El primer debate de la Reforma Educacional* (pp. 170–201). Santiago, Chile: Ministerio de Educación (Mineduc).

Muñoz, S. D. (2014, July 27). ¿Cómo es el modelo escolar holandés? [What does the Dutch school model look like?] *La Tercera*.

Nikolai, R., & Rothe, K. (2017). Entscheidungen in der Schulpolitik. Begründungsmuster von Parteien und die Rolle von Wissen [Decisions in school policy. Reasoning patterns of parties and the role of knowledge.]. In S. Reh, E. Glaser, B. Behm, & T. Drope (Eds.), *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik. Beiheft. 63. Wissen machen. Beiträge zu einer Geschichte erziehungswissenschaftlichen Wissens in Deutschland zwischen 1945 und 1990 ([124]-142)*. Basel, Weinheim: Beltz Juventa. Retrieved from http://www.beltz.de/de/nc/verlagsgruppe-beltz/gesamtprogramm.html?isbn=978-3-7799-3517-9

OECD. (2004). *Revisión de políticas nacionales de educación [Review of national education policies]*. Paris, France: Oecd.

OECD. (2010). *PISA 2009 results: Executive summary*. Paris, France: Oecd. Retrieved from https://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisaproducts/46619703.pdf

OECD. (2011a). *Country note - Chile. Education at a glance 2011: OECD Indicators*. Retrieved from http://www.cooperativa.cl/noticias/site/artic/20110913/asocfile/20110913115809/48675370_1.pdf

OECD. (2011b). *PISA 2009 at a Glance*. Retrieved from https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/pisa-2009-at-a-glance/how-do-education-systems-and-schools-select-and-group-students_9789264095250-35-en

OECD. (2012). *Public and private schools: How management and funding relate to their Socio-economic Profile*. Paris, France: Oecd. doi:10.1787/9789264175006-en

OECD. (2013). *Education Policy Outlook Finland*. Retrieved from http://www.oecd.org/education/EDUCATION%20POLICY%20OUTLOOK%20FINLAND_EN.pdf

OECD. (2014). *Education Policy Outlook Netherlands*. Retrieved from http://www.oecd.org/education/EDUCATION%20POLICY%20OUTLOOK_NETHERLANDS_EN%20.pdf

OECD. (2014a). *Country note - Chile. Education at a glance 2014. OECD Indicators*. Retrieved from https://www.oecd.org/edu/Chile-EAG2014-Country-Note.pdf

OECD. (2014b). *Country note*. Finland: Education at a Glance. Retrieved from http://www.oecd.org/education/Finland-EAG2014-Country-Note.pdf

OECD. (2014c). *PISA 2012 results in Focus*. Paris, France: Oecd. Retrieved from http://www.oecd.org/pisa/keyfindings/pisa-2012-results-overview.pdf

Ojeda, A. (2014, November 4). Eyzaguirre en su visita a Finlandia: "Hay dos o tres maestros tratando que todos avancen al mismo nivel" [Eyzaguirre on his visit to Finland: "There are two or three teachers trying to get everybody to the same level"]. *Radio.Uchile.cl*. Retrieved from https://radio.uchile.cl/2014/11/04/eyzaguirre-en-su-visita-a-finlandia-hay-dos-o-tres-maestros-tratando-de-que-todos-vayan-avanzando-al-mismo-nivel/

Parcerisa, L., & Verger, A. (2019). PISA projections in Chile: The selective use of league leaders in the enactment of recent education reforms. In F. Waldow & G. Steiner-Khamsi (Eds.), *Understanding PISA's attractiveness: Critical analyses in comparative policy studies* (pp. 25–48). New York, NY: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Patrinos, H. A. (2013). Private education provision and public finance: The Netherlands. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 5185. Retrieved from https://ssrn.com/abstract=1543044.

Phillips, D., & Ochs, K. (2003). Processes of policy borrowing in education: Some explanatory and analytical devices. *Comparative Education*, *39* (4), 451–461. doi:10.1080/0305006032000162020

Ritter, J. (1976). *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie [Historical Dictionary of Philosophy]*. Basel/Stuttgart: Schwabe Und Co.

Saavedra Facusse, T. B. (2013). *Efecto del financiamiento compartido sobre el rendimiento escolar [Effect of Shared Funding on School Performance] (Master's Thesis)*. Universidad de Chile, Washington, DC.

Samelson, F., & Kamin, L. J. (1975). On the science and politics of the IQ. *Social Research: The International Quarterly of the Social Sciences*, *42*(3), 467–488.
Schriewer, J. (1988). The method of comparison and the need for externalization: Methodological criteria and sociological concepts. In J. Schriewer (Ed.), *Komparatistische Bibliothek: Vol. 1. Theories and methods in comparative education* (pp. 25–83). Frankfurt Am Main, (Germany): Lang.
Schriewer, J. (2007). Reference societies and model constructions: Questioning international policy studies. In J. J. Hesse (Ed.), *Staatsreform in Deutschland und Europa: Vol. 7. The public sector in transition: East Asia and the European Union compared* (pp. 85–102). Baden-Baden, Germany: Nomos.
Schriewer, J., & Martínez, C. (2004). Constructions of Internationality in Education. In G. Steiner-Khamsi (Ed.), *The global politics of educational borrowing and lending* (pp. 29–53). New York, NY: Teachers College Press, Columbia University.
Sellar, S., & Lingard, B. (2013). Looking East: Shanghai, PISA 2009 and the reconstitution of reference societies in the global education policy field. *Comparative Education*, *49*(4), 464–485. doi:10.1080/03050068.2013.770943
Serrano, G. (2014). Confepa marcha en 20 ciudades del país en protesta a reforma educacional [Confepa march in 20 cities of the country in protest to educational reform]. *La Tercera,* October 11.
Smith, E. (2007). *Atkinsons und Hildegards Einführung in die psychologie [Atkinsons and Hildegard's introduction to psychology]*. Wiesbaden, Germany: Spektrum Akademischer Verlag.
Steiner-Khamsi, G. (2003). The politics of league tables. *Journal of Social Science Education*, *1*. Retrieved from http://www.jsse.org/index.php/jsse/article/view/470/386
Steiner-Khamsi, G. (2012). Understanding policy borrowing and lending: Building. Comparative Policy Studies. In G. Steiner-Khamsi & F. Waldow (Eds.), *World yearbook of education. Policy borrowing and lending in education* (pp. 3–17). New York, NY: Routledge.
Steiner-Khamsi, G. (2014). Cross-national policy borrowing: Understanding reception and translation. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, *34*(2), 153. doi:10.1080/02188791.2013.875649
Steiner-Khamsi, G. (Ed.). (2004). *The global politics of educational borrowing and lending*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press, Columbia University.
Steiner-Khamsi, G., & Quist, H. (2000). The politics of educational borrowing: Reopening the case of achimota in british ghana. *Comparative Education Review*, *44*(3), 272–299. doi:10.1086/447615
Steiner-Khamsi, G., & Waldow, F. (2018). PISA for scandalisation, PISA for projection: The use of international large-scale assessments in education policy making – an introduction. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, *16*(5), 557. doi:10.1080/14767724.2018.1531234
Stromquist, N., & Sanyal, A. (2013). Student resistance to neoliberalism in Chile. *International Studies in Sociology of Education, 23*(2), 152–178. doi:10.1080/09620214.2013.790662
Sturm, J., Groenendijk, L., Kruithof, B., & Rens, J. (1998). Educational Pluralism - a historical study of socalled 'pillarization' in the Netherlands, including a comparison with some developments in South African education. *Comparative Education*, *35*(3), 303–317. doi:10.1080/03050069927847
Takayama, K. (2018). The constitution of East Asia as a counter reference society through PISA: A postcolonial/de-colonial intervention AU - Takayama, Keita. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, *16*(5), 1–15. doi:10.1080/14767724.2018.1532282
Toro Cáceres, J. (2015). Libertad de enseñanza y derecho a la educación en la historia constitucional chilena. Análisis del desarrollo legal de la educación escolar, 1810-2014 [Freedom of education and the right to education in Chile's constitutional history. Analysis of the legal development of school education, 1810-2014], (Licentiate Thesis). Universidad de Chile, Santiago de Chile.
Valdés, J. G. (1995). *Pinochet's economists: The Chicago School in Chile*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press. doi:10.1086/ahr/102.1.246-a
Vega, M., von Baer, A., & Toro, M. (2014, March 25). Vamos a poner una retroexcavadora, porque aquí hay que destruir los cimientos del modelo neo-liberal [We are going to put a backhoe, because here we have to destroy the foundations of the neo-liberal model]. *El Mercurio*.
Verger, A. (2014, Mai 5). Decommodifying education in Chile? Bachelet's reforms in the face of persistent educational inequalities. *Worlds of Education*. Retrieved from https://www.ei-ie.org/en/woe_homepage/woe_detail/4786/decommodifying-education-in-chile-bachelets-reforms-in-the-face-of-persistent-educational-inequalities.
Verger, A. (2016). *The privatization of education: A political economy of global education reform. International perspectives on educational reform series*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press. Retrieved from http://gbv.eblib.com/patron/FullRecord.aspx?p=4699788
Verger, A., & Bonal, X. (2016). Recontextualización de políticas y (cuasi)mercados educativos. Un análisis de las dinámicas de demanda y oferta escolar en Chile. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, *24*(27), 1–23. doi:10.14507/epaa.24.2098
Waldow, F. (2010). Der Traum vom 'skandinavisch schlau werden'. Drei Thesen zur Rolle Finnlands als Projektionsfläche in der gegenwärtigen Bildungsdebatte [The Dream of 'Becoming Clever the Scandinavian

Way' – Three Propositions on Finland's Role as Projection Surface in the Present Debate on Education]. *Zeitschrift Für Pädagogik*, *56*(4), 497–511.

Waldow, F. (2012). Standardization and Legitimacy: Two Central Concepts in Research on Educational Borrowing and Lending. In G. Steiner-Khamsi & F. Waldow (Eds.), *World yearbook of education. Policy borrowing and lending in education* (pp. 411–427). New York, NY: Routledge.

Waldow, F. (2017). Projecting images of the 'good' and the 'bad school': Top scorers in educational large-scale assessments as reference societies AU - Waldow, Florian. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, *47*(5), 647–664. doi:10.1080/03057925.2016.1262245

Waldow, F., & Steiner-Khamsi, G. (2019). *Understanding PISA's attractiveness: Critical analyses in comparative policy studies*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Waldow, F., Takayama, K., & Sung, Y.-K. (2014). Rethinking the pattern of external policy referencing: Media discourses over the 'Asian Tigers" PISA success in Australia, Germany and South Korea. *Comparative Education*, *50*(3), 302–321. doi:10.1080/03050068.2013.860704

West, E. G. (1997). Education vouchers. In principle and practice. *World Bank Research Observe*, *21*(1), 83–103. doi:10.1093/wbro/12.1.83